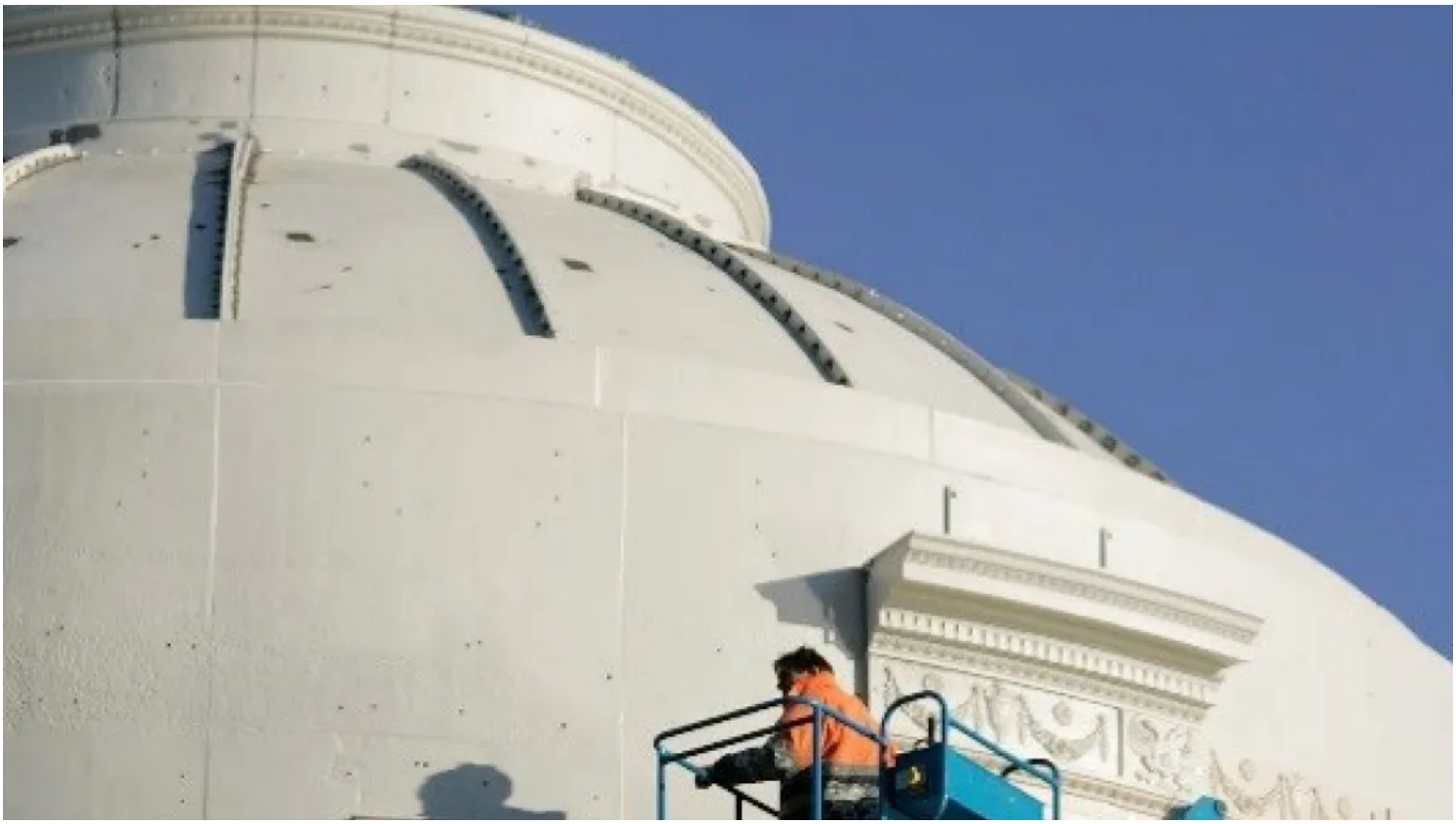


Fergusson Gallery, in Perth, conserved its 19th-century cast iron dome roof thanks to a Heritage Grant

Our funding not only conserves and enhances heritage, but increases access to, and awareness and enjoyment of heritage, according to a new HLF-commissioned report.

There is also evidence that heritage funding generates economic benefits.

An evaluation of Heritage Grants distributed between 2002-2007 found that 90% of projects made heritage more accessible and 75% improved awareness of heritage. In addition, 58% of projects increased visitor numbers, and the average Trip Advisor rating of the funded heritage attractions is 4.5 out of 5.

The report also found that 130,000m2 of heritage floor space was refurbished, and another 70,000m2 of new space for heritage was created. 60% of funded projects created new jobs, and 45% sustained volunteering growth for at least five years after the project completed.

The Heritage Grants programme, HLF's largest open programme, launched in April 2002, with the objective of "broaden(ing) the horizons of heritage" by providing grants of £50,000-£25million for any type of heritage project in the UK.

Evaluating the impact

> "Not only has HLF successfully increased and sustained involvement in heritage ... but the programme has also generated considerable economic benefit for local communities."

Consultants Mott MacDonald evaluated a proportionally-representative sample of 133 Heritage Grant projects (13%) awarded over a six-year period, via an online survey of 83 grant recipients, case studies of 50 projects, and additional in-depth economic modelling of six projects.

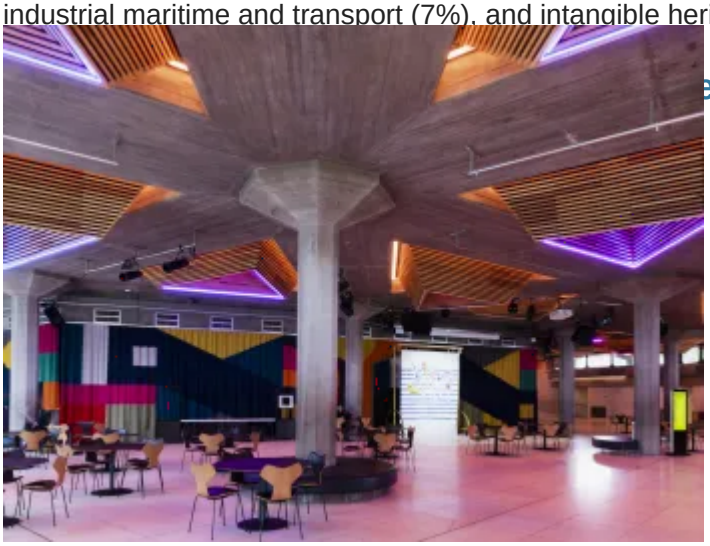
The projects were led by numerous organisations that have since evolved, and were delivered by individuals who have often moved on. Evaluating and evidencing what remains was not easy, which is why the insights from this study are so valuable to HLF.

Economic benefits of investing in heritage

The six projects subject to economic modelling were found to have generated an additional £8.4m annually. Equated over the past 10 years, this represents a return of over three times what was originally invested in those projects.

Kion Ahadi, Head of Evaluation at HLF, said: “The results from this study show that not only has HLF successfully increased and sustained involvement in heritage through, for example, raising visitor numbers by developing heritage sites as successful visitor attractions, but the programme has also generated considerable economic benefit for local communities, in terms of new jobs - both direct and indirect - GVA (gross value added) and positive regeneration effects."

Between 2002-2007 the Heritage Grants programme awarded £970m to 1,111 projects (equivalent to £930,320 per project) spread across museums, libraries and archives (35%), buildings and monuments (33%), natural heritage (19%), industrial maritime and transport (7%), and intangible heritage (6%).



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Heritage Grants Programme impact, September 2017